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# HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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SUBJECT: "Herb Vinegar" --Information from Extension food specialist,  
U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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A timely question, these days, is "How to make herb vinegar?"

In most parts of the country...August is the big season for the harvest of foliage herbs. And gardeners like to preserve some of the distinctive herb flavor for vinegars to use later in sauces and salads. Among the foliage herbs that make good vinegars are tarragon...basil...mint and chives.

Miss Miriam Birdseye, Extension food specialist of the U. S. Department of Agriculture summarizes these pointers on making vinegar with a foliage herb.

For good full flavor...cut the herbs just before the plant comes into flower. Use the fresh cuttings at once. Get a cider vinegar or a white wine vinegar for the base of your mixture.

Equipment? Well...you need a wide-mouthed jar. One that's not too large for shaking because when the vinegar's in the making you'll need to give the jar a shake every day. The jar must also be one that can be tightly covered. You'll need a pestle or wooden potato masher to bruise the leafy herb tips. And you'll need a glass or a porcelain sauce pan to heat the vinegar.

It's really a simple process. Pack the herb tips in the jar loosely. Then take the pestle or wooden potato masher and bruise them to release the oil. When the vinegar comes to a boiling point...pour it over the bruised tips. Fill the jar up to within two inches of the top. Cover it tightly and set it in a warm place where the mixture can infuse for 10 days. You can help the infusion along by giving the jar a daily shaking.

At the end of 10 days, taste the herb vinegar and see if the flavor is to your liking. If it isn't strong enough...strain out the herbs and discard them. (If iron or copper shows through the plating of your sieve, use a coarse cloth instead.) Add another fresh cutting of bruised herb tips to the vinegar without boiling this time...and let the mixture infuse until it's as strong as you wish. Strain out the herbs. Filter the vinegar through muslin or filter paper. And your herb vinegar's ready to be bottled and stored.

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